

TOKYO FAND

VIDEO GAMES • MOVIES • ANIME • STUFF

ISSUE 1

CHINOGI -
WHAT IS IT?

GAME
AND
ANIME
MUSIC!

RETRO
GAMING!

SEXY PARODIUS

GET DOWN AND DIRTY ON
THE SEGA SATURN

DESTRUCTION
DERBY 2

ANIME
AND THE
PC ENGINE

TOKYO FAN

ISSUE 1 - MARCH 1997

Produced by SUNTEAM

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Steven Walker

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"Darkness returns at the foot of the lighthouse."
Japanese Proverb

View Column
Probably the most hot topic now is your own, older games have progressed dramatically from the days of blocky, unrealistic graphics and simple soundtracks. Games like Super Mario 64 and the like are

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EDITORIAL

WELCOME TO THE FANTASY ZONE!

Hi there, and if you don't know what the above heading is all about, then I guess you aren't reading this for it's gaming content, eh?

KONNICHIWA!

And if you didn't understand that then I can presume that you're not reading this because of the *animes/manga* content. However, if you couldn't work out what either of the above headings are on about, then here's your big chance to expand your mind.

HELLO, I'M MISTER ED

Well, I'm not actually. I'm the Ed, which is a totally different thing if you know all about *spicy American comedy shows*. I'm afraid you'll have to get used to obscure feelings springing up all over the place. It's just one of those things. Anyways, if you're reading this (and if you're not then I may as well stop typing now), I must thank you for at least giving *Tokyo Fan* more than just a passing glance. It's not an easy task to produce a feature that is worthwhile reading (and I hope that one is), but it can be a very rewarding experience (personally) and I hope the effort's been worth it. The 'one is not run for profit' we've tried to keep the prices down enough to just cover the cost of reproduction, along with a little extra for the *tiny* (advertising, replacement printer ink etc.). But enough of the tedious verbiage stuff, what's *Tokyo Fan* all about?

YES, WHAT?

You really want to know?

YES!

OK, I'll tell you. First and foremost, we cover video games, from golden oldies to the latest import titles. Obviously the amount we can cover largely depends on the size of my wallet, so we can't promise to review every new game that comes out. We're not a professional mag after all. *Sega* and *PlayStation* will get their fair share, with a bit of PC thrown in now and again too. Game music CDs will also feature. Our second main concern is that of anything Japanese, especially anime and manga. I originally intended to concentrate solely on these, but the market has taken a bit of a plunge lately, making it difficult to find anything new and interesting to say. If you're only interested in one of the above subjects, why not give the other a try? I can certainly recommend both, but remember that there are as many dodgy anime videos as there are crap games, so don't be put off by the first thing you try. Because it is the nature of this Universe to weave complex webs around things of apparent simplicity, we're going to cover movies, videos and anything else interesting that crops up in the meantime. That's my excuse anyway.

ARE YOU THOROUGH YET?

Almost. Please remember that feature there on support from the readers. Tell your friends. Word of mouth is vital to us as advertising can be a tremendous problem. Let us know what you think of the 'one and what you'd like to see in the future. We will listen. But above all, enjoy it!

Paul Walker, Editor

View Column
Probably the most hot topic now is your own, older games have progressed dramatically from the days of blocky, unrealistic graphics and simple soundtracks. Games like *Super Mario 64* and the like are

Retrospective
Almost synonymous with nostalgia is the association for *memories from Japan*. In contrast to an older audience that remembers animation and comic art, the younger ones with the likes that *Hot Potato* can provide. *Manga* is the word for Japanese comics, which are very different in its execution. They are usually far longer, with a far more fluid and smooth execution and can be found in more comic strips, although their graphic novels can be up to 1,000 pages long.

At this time, with such a large, vast 2D art style, it can be hard to find the right, and a change in general style is indicated for *Paul Walker* to

£1.00 + 10p postage including a p-



NEWSDESK

ZENTRAEDI ALERT!

Closest science fiction Macross seems to be making a big of a comeback on consoles. The PlayStation has Macross Digital Mission VF-X, a very promising looking 3D flight-simulation; it's up (postponed), while Saturn owners will soon be playing what looks like a more traditional space-based affair. Both games are out this spring in Japan.

Nintendo 64 owners will also have their fair share of Macross, with a game based on its American incarnation - Robotech. Only pre-production shots have been released, but it looks like it could be hot, especially with the analogue stick for control.



JAPAN'S TOP FIVE GAMES

1. Ridge Racer (PlayStation)
2. Dragon Quest III (Super Famicom)
3. Super Donkey Kong 3 (Super Famicom)
4. Enemy Zero (Saturn)
5. Super Mario 64 (Nintendo 64)



SEGA SOUNDTRACKS

CDs of game music are nothing new in Japan, and two of Sega's latest arcade hits have been given the treatment. *Sega Rally* and *Virtua Fighter 3* OSTs are out now. Hassle imports for them!

THIS JUST IN... THIS JUST IN... THIS JUST IN...



MARS ATTACKS! THE VERDICT

Director Tim Burton has always had a passion for the strange, and *Mars Attacks!* is no exception. Following the more popular alien invasion movies, it goes mostly for laughs rather than drama. There's not much point in explaining the plot - little green men land and blow the crap out of anything and everything they can, partly for the fun of it. No sinister motives or underlying messages here, just pure mayhem.

The Martians are superbly rendered in CGI, and move with a deliberate, puppet-like motion, their heads jerking erratically from side to side. In fact, out of the whole cast, the Martians are the only thing in the movie with any character to them. The four human cast, despite a slow first half to introduce them all, has very little character development and this is part of the movie's downfall. Although it may be intentional, you just don't care when they get nuked as they're just cardboard cut-outs on the set.

The Martians are basically Gremlins in a different skin, very mischievous, and this is where the laughs come from, with their 'operations' and general lurking about. In fact, they could have titled this as *Gremlins 3* and no one would have noticed the difference.

There are plenty of good things in this film - the effects, the humour and the typical Burton weirdness, but I can't help feeling a little disappointed. Independence Day would have benefited from the destruction mayhem of *Mars Attacks!* but even duched deeper characters than the Great effects, though.



A JOLLY GOOD FISTING

The second compiled graphic novel of Post-apocalyptic-martial-arts-genre-fest *The Art Of The Martial Star* is out in the USA now, and should appear in UK comic shops soon. *Art II* is the story of Kestrel, a master of a martial art that makes heads explode and bodies split in two. This second novel, *The Night Of The Jackal*, sees Ben and Lynne, two young orphans, call for Kestrel's help. But when he comes, the dangerous Jackal gang follow him.

It's a brilliant comic comic and I strongly urge everyone to track it down as soon as they can.



VIRTUAL-ON REAL-ON

Out in Japan now is a new range of models from the Sega Coin-Op, Virtual-On. They're so damn sweet that I just had to show some pics of them!



STREET FIGHTER II: FINAL FURY



FINAL FANTASY VII

FIGHTING FRENZY

Video games have always had a tradition of being made into anime and vice versa. Lately, best 'em up seems to be getting the full treatment, though. The excellent Street Fighter II: Final Fury and Street Fighter: Shattered have all made it onto the screen. The latest is the long live in Capcom's popular Vampire Hunter, known as Darkstalkers in the West, which has just come out in Japan.

The 10 volume series Street Fighter II V is out now in America, courtesy of Phage Video. Both dubbed and subtitled. There is no sign of it over here yet, and if it does emerge eventually, it is most likely to be dubbed only.

On the subject of Phage Video, it seems that part four of Macross Plus will finally be released soon. And about bloody time too!

THE HOBBIT MOVIE!

Rumour has it that director Peter Jackson is contemplating a movie version of J.R.R. Tolkien's classic story, The Hobbit. Putting such a well-loved book onto the screen will be no easy task, and being a big fan of Tolkien, I'm not sure I want to see anything try.

To get the casting spot on, the locations just right and the atmosphere of the story is going to be a staggering task. But at least the digital effects today are up to creating the dragon Smaug. But how much will be out to do is all in?



NEW IN JAPAN

All the latest releases from the East.

GAMES

Blaster Action Return (Saturn - Victor)
Sakura Wars (Saturn - Sega)
Neon Genesis Evangelion (Saturn - Sega)
Psycho Ryuu Sun (Saturn - Compile)

Harvest Park (PlayStation - Sky Star System)

Border Max 2 (Super Famicom - Hudson)

Tenchi Mayoi (Saturn - Power LDC)

Namco Museum Vol. 3 (PlayStation - Namco)

Anime Freak FX Vol. 4 (PC-FX - NBC Home Electronics)

VIDEOS

Stargate: Next Vol. 5
Call of Duty: The Revolution Vol. 3
Pretty Sammy TV 2
Virtua Fighter: Chronicle Clip
TV Series Runas 1/2, 27, 28

COMPACT DISCS

Moblie Suit: Gundam Vol. 2
Steel Target - 3
Cute Honey P
Tenchi Mayoi Radio Jukebox Disc 2
Tetsurou Memorial No. 8
Stevie N' Erix Vol. 1

COMICS

Sakura Spirits 4
Hand Roll'd Page 4
Virtua Fighter: Kira
Side Story of Gundam Z
Pretty Sammy 1
Sakura Wars - Anthology Comic

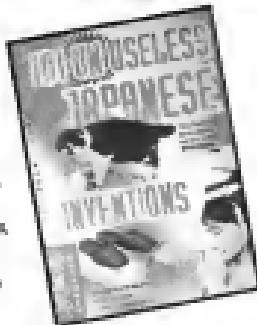
The art of CHINDOGU

101 UNUSELESS JAPANESE INVENTIONS

By Keng Kawakami

Translated by Dan Papas

Edited by Hugh Fearey-Whitewall
£5.99 F 150 pages (full colour)
Published by HarperCollins Publishers,
77-85 Fulham Palace Road,
Hammersmith, London W6 8JB
Available in any bookshop
0800 4358723



*This Hair Awake Eyepatch is the one
odd thing to keep your eyes
when you need to lie down. And
yes, they're regular clothes pieces.*

Chances are you have idly flicked through the TV channels when on many have come across the idea of Chindogu as 'It'll Never Work'. The basis behind each Chindogu (which literally means an odd or discarded tool) is that it must be an object which at first, seems to fulfil a purpose, but on closer inspection is (almost) uselessly useless. The creator and founder of Chindogu is Keng Kawakami, who was originally a commentator for anime series in the 1980s, and then became the editor of a horse shopping magazine. It was here that the idea first came about. He has now written four books on the subject and the International Chindogu Society has over 10,000 members.

The book itself contains 101 of these, utterly useless inventions in full colour, each with an accompanying piece of text that explains what it is, and why you want it so badly. The inventions, as you can see from the pictures, range from the ludicrously silly (the hydrophobic bath mat, for example) to the merely useful (the portable railway map). Some are merely amusing, others are hilarious, and the descriptions are written so seriously, with a good dose of very dry humour that it makes it even funnier.

Also included is an application form for the International Chindogu Society, which encourages any potentially useless inventors to get their idea officially on paper and maybe in future ICI-inventors. This is a perfect conversation piece and if anyone out there gets a dull batch of Christmas presents this year, cheer yourself up and get a copy. At just over £5 (or £6.99) it's a bargain!



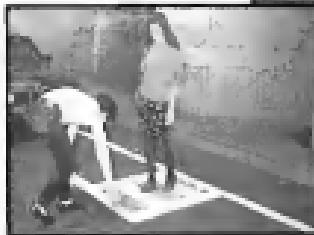
*For those of you who are too
lazy to be destroying your lungs, this Honey
Sticks' Stick is just the ticket.
Strongly enough, it has a
chicken resemblance to the
breathing masks in the movie,
Armageddon or *The Valley of Gold*?*

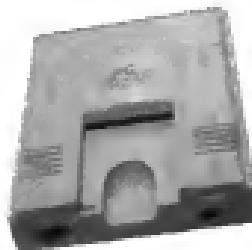


*Well I don't know about you,
but I think this Butter Stick is a
pretty sweet idea. I wouldn't
be surprised if I spotted it on a
supermarket in a couple of
years time. I'll stop it anyway.*



*If you ever have had
trouble chewing a deer
meat meal, then this
Portable Zebra Chewing is
all you need. Just lay it
down and you have an
alternative for an easy meal
(although I'm sure the
chewers accept no
responsibility for any injury
or loss of life resulting from
the use.)*





DIGITAL ANIME

The PC Engine

Many people may not realize this, but anime has always been an important element in video games. A walk through any arcade or a glance at any (successful) console from the humble MVS (or JAPCOM) in Japan to the PlayStation will confirm this. In fact, a large proportion of the people who are now hooked on anime and manga may have had their first glimpse of the anime style in a video game, even if they did not realize it at the time.

But even from the beginning, most anime-based games didn't reach the UK unchanged in some way, sometimes just the name, but more often than not more drastically than that. Who among you while fighting with the Master System joyed when playing Black Belt would have thought that in its native country it was originally called *Hokage No Ken* (The Fist of the North Star). Anyone familiar with the game and the comic will now realize that the way the bodies 'exploded' really does make sense. Further along the time line, did anyone out there realize that *Mystic Defender* on the Sega Mega Drive (along with *Speculator* on the Master System) was the Western incarnation of top manga *Kaijû-Q*, even if the hero now wears trousers?

Another fist of the North Star coming on the Mega Drive was re-issued last decade, and although fewer

changes were made, the Moody exploding bodies and heads of the original were probably absent in the UK version. In fact, with the exception of a few older titles (Zitan on MS is a good example), import software is often the only way to get hold of original anime games, and despite the high price, it has usually always been worth it. Especially when anime used to be very rare - more often than not, the decision to buy a game was based on the amount of anime-style in it.

PC WHATEVER

For die-hard anime fans, NEC's wonder machine, the PC Engine, was (and will be in some respects) The God of games consoles. Despite never being released in the UK (although it was often rumoured), and failing in the US due to some disgracefully poor advertising and promotion (being called a TurboGrafx-16 didn't help much either), the PC Engine was a huge success in Japan and survived in the West, care of the importers.

For a machine with an inferior specification, it easily held its own against the Megadrive and Super Famicom (SNES), thanks to some wonderfully designed custom chips inside. Out of the

three machines, the PC Engine is the only one that has constantly had its capabilities pushed

beyond the inherent limits by some very skilful and inventive programming. In fact, even though it was only an 8-Bit console, it handled games just as well as a 16-Bit machine (as *Street Fighter II* proves very well), and beat the big boys many times over in the gameplay stakes.

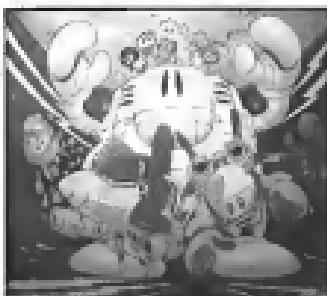
Ryo Koishi in City Hunter



The Secret Of Star War

However, the major card up NEC's sleeve, and the primary reason for the success of the Engine was its CD-ROM drive - the first on any home console (and released way ahead of Sega's failed

effort). Having a CD-ROM gave it a distinct advantage with both sound and storage capacity for graphics etc and allowed expansive anime-style levels to become standard. As such, the Engine became the primary target for games based on the mass of comics and animated series in Japan



Star People had one of the best art styles

But, the games were not restricted to TV or comic licences. The creative talents working on games for this machine and others was so great that many games had enough style and depth of character to spawn animated videos of their own. *Dreamcast*, *Galaxy Fantasy*, *Tara*, *Dragonlayer*, *Dragon Knight* and probably the greatest RPG of all time, *Yu* (pronounced Yu-ki) all became either one-shot videos or short series, with many also making it into comic format. This trend continues today with manga





Star Force 2

of PlayStation titles such as Jumping Flash and Tekken, and of course, the excellent animated Street Fighter II movie.

Many other games on the PC Engine feature lengthy action intro sequences. Among the noteworthy are Star Force, Shinken Man 3, Dracula X, Dungeon Explorer II, Far East of Eden II (Hara), Scatter and the Cosmic Fantasy RPG. **A HANDFUL OF GAMES**

MACROSS 3586
(MASTIA, CD-ROM, JAPAN)

With the player taking control of Macross, this drops you in the hot seat of a Valkyrie fighter in a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up. As a game, it's a far blower, if not outstanding, but nice touches during play (such as a battle going on in the background) and loads

and loads of animated sequences throughout make this a must for Macross fans. Also, the game soundtrack is lifted straight from the original, so it's an OST as well - double value!

RANMA 1/2
(MASTIA, CD-ROM, JAPAN)

There are three Ranma games in total on the Engine, all on CD-ROM, based on the immensely popular comic of the ever-changing martial artist. The first is a fairly primitive beat 'em up, and even with some lengthy animated sequences that vary in quality, it fails to really entertain. The second is a superb Digital Comic (see box-off), which tells the story of some big white bear instant

on marrying Girl-type Ranma, and recounts on keeping Her Immortal forever with the tip of a special flower. It's quite a lengthy and varied adventure, with the player taking on different roles in the story progresses, and is very funny in places, even if you don't understand a word of Japanese. To top it all, the graphics are very well drawn, a vast improvement over the first game, and there are some lovely animations and original fighting scenes. The third game is a one-on-one beat 'em up which is competently executed, but far surpassed by the superb animated intro to between levels, easily the best reason to buy the game!

DORAGON (Star-wrecker)
(HUDSON SOFT, HUCARD/CD-ROM, JAPAN)

Based on the cult British comic about a robotic Mac cat, the first Dorgon game is a turn-overhead action after that involves digging holes for the cat to fall in. Great music. The second is a photorever saluted (DORAMAN NIGHT). It has more simplistic graphics and poorer music, and despite the intended age group, it does get very tricky towards

COMING TO AMERICA

Western anime style games on the Engine did eventually reach the US, they were mostly RPG's. Naturally they would have to be translated and re-dubbed in English, and this has been achieved with varying degrees of success. Here are a few examples of the parties dreams and nightmares.

VS 1 & II (CD-ROM, RPG)

Surely one of the finest RPG's in existence (and great value with both games on one CD), the translation is superb. Almost all of the original names remain the same, and the voice acting is good enough to put companies like Manga Video to shame. Top marks, manzo.

BEST LINE "Get out of here now. Or do you still punch like the others?"

VS III (CD-ROM, RPG)

After the excellent efforts on the first two, much was expected of this incarnation. I remember skipping the CD in, turning on the power and...GAH! HAKU! WOP! The voice over of the Japanese intro tells the legend of an ancient warrior with fur hair that defeated the evil demon Gilbora many

years ago. But wait a minute! The hideously nasal American voice-over croaks on about Adol defeating "Dannocat" and urging the player to be brave and bold, as though you've already completed the game. What were they on? This is game speech, whilst being very frequent, is utterly terrible. They must have dragged people of the street to dub it, as there sure as hell weren't any actors involved. And if that isn't bad enough, most of the names have been changed. Don't get me wrong, this is still a great game, but the translation is a fail-flop in how NOT to do it.

BEST LINE "Think back to your worst nightmare." (PLUG)

DAUNGEON EXPLORER II (CD-ROM, ACTION RPG)

This is a game with quite lengthy animated scenes, and a fair chunk of dialogue, so it was interesting to hear how it turned out. The acting is very competent, with the casting for the evil Phader being particularly good. As such, it is a game that you can quite happily play without cringing, and a welcome return to the quality dubbing of Vs.

BEST LINE "I'm not afraid and I

DRAGON SLAYER - THE LEGEND OF HEROES
(CD-ROM, RPG)

Lots of dialogue throughout this game gives the perfect chance to show off how good acting in games can be. It's just a pity they made a pig's ear of it. Although not as distractingly weird as Vs II, it's still odd and obviously being read straight from the script. The intro is fine, but the ending is particularly uncomfortable which is a shame as it takes the feeling out of a really dramatic scene. Ho hum.

BEST LINE "What's eating you, Your Highness?"

EBOLE (CD-ROM, ACTION RPG)

An average game made up for with frequent and attractive cut-scenes, Working Design did a very competent job of the translation. The acting is fine, if not brilliant, and character voices are well chosen and it all leaves you with a nice warm glow inside. I also hear they're working on 32 bit titles, so there's still some hope yet.

BEST LINE "...I'll strangle you with your scratch!"

you need (you yet to complete it and for a platform partner).

ТАРИХАДА

Another Digital Score, based on an appealing anime and manga series. The game places the player in the shoes of a young sports journalist called Mazzu as he follows the career of Yumi, a "cute and huggable judo girl." Nicely drawn graphics with some very good animated bits here and there, and a long playing time give this the thumbs up. There's also a bonus: learn some

CITY HUNTER
ELIASQUET, RICARDO, 1948-

Indirect costs: the home economy

Undoubtedly, the huge potential of the Internet was hardly tapped upon in this platform-adventure style game. Choosing from various missions, you as top bodyguard & ears-private-eye Ryō Saito, must run around shooting the bad guys while gathering information from various people to complete the level. It's quite fun and has some excellent music, but it dated fast and the wealth of Japanese text makes it hard to really get involved.



One of the best books ever, *Godfather* made it into the *ESL Readers* as a *Classic Novel*.

DIGITAL EDITION

Digi-Connects are a style of game that although very popular in Japan, have been surprisingly ignored by the West: only very few have ever surfaced officially - *Brachter* on Mega-CD for example.

The style of gameplay in the majority of Digital Comics is very simple. Basically, you are presented with a situation, along with a series of actions you can perform. Most of these will do something, but the correct ones will progress the story to the next scene. Depending on the skill of the designer, a surprising amount of freedom can be accomplished considering the "multiple choice" approach. The *Space 101* game is a prime example, with a good freedom of movement, and even light combat.

As most Digi-Comics are there to tell a story, you'll most probably not be able to lose - just get stuck. There are exceptions (like *Guidozaar*) which give you a certain number of sprays for each segment before you have to recode.

Although this may sound as dubious as "interactive novels," I have found all the Digicomics I've played so far to be very enjoyable, and I'll always go back to them after they've been completed. For the most part, the sheer amount of quality driven artwork is enough in itself to play them and once the minor problem of the captions being in Japanese is overcome (which isn't all that difficult) then what you're left with is a nice reward in a non-linear format.

But don't take my word for it. Go on out and see for yourself. (If you can track them down, which is no easy task these days, I would highly recommend the *Karma*, *UG* and *Secret of the Blue Water* Digi-Convos, because they're really great.)

CONFIDENTIAL

On the subject of wargame games, it is interesting to see how that directly influenced Western companies, particularly in the days of the Amiga, who held the mistaken belief that they could come up with quality of the Japanese software games.

One of the earlier influences can be seen on the picture of the hero's face that you always seemed to see, and the tiger (SC) platform game style. Nearly, but no thanks, ARIDYA.

An average Amiga user (or up) that featured a memory driven while-superslot sequence and also had it's name in (correct) brackets on the title screen. Tried desperately to be notable. Failed.

Another console-inspired-and-boosted performance, this one had a nice pat on the wrist of a biker, charging with a sword. (See also *Contra* in our list of the *best games*, [Konami's 25 Must-Play Games](#))

Of course, games like Head & Lanes have used actual memory events and those have already been done, and all the game makers are probably from memory database creation, so there are no



STOP PRESS

SEGA AND NAMCO JOIN FORCES AT LAST!

As folks, as you can see from our ULTRA-EXCLUSIVE pictures, the two giants of the console industry have finally decided to join together for what must be the most exciting project EVER. As yet untitle, this new 3D beat 'em up combines the characters from the highly successful TEKKEN and VIRTUA FIGHTER series and will be available on both Saturn and PlayStation sometime this summer (in Japan). The Japanese press have gone totally wild with excitement following the announcement of this game, with more than a little speculation on why these two major rivals have chosen to work with each other, although the Nintendo 64 cannot be ignored as part of the reason. More details as they come.



Although these are very early pictures, they have some very important areas of the game. As you can see, both Tidus and VF girls, orange bars are selectable, although the results not yet seen in actual gameplay. Also, the original knockdowns from both games will remain, with a whole range of new ones. You may notice that the characters are the same, but as already mentioned, these are from a working version of the game. So for the final version, we are promised all new costumes for EVERY character!

MR PEACH LIVE FROM MOON CITY

PEACH: Well here I am folks, coming to you live from everyone's favourite place, Moon City. And boy have I got a lot to moan about! Every issue, I'll be giving you a piece of wisdom that will carry you through the day. There's certainly enough to complain about, as you'd see if you were here from all the long faces gathered around me. Let's ask someone here what's bothering them. Yes, you. The young boy with the moustache. What's up? You're live on air.

BOY: Um... Well, I'm fed up with the size of boom that video games come in.

PEACH: And why is that, my spotty little chum?

BOY: They're just too big.

PEACH: You've certainly hit the nail on the spleen there pal! Just WHY THE HELL do PlayStation games come in double CD-sized boxes! Apart from taking up twice the room of normal boxes, you just can't cram 'em into a CD rack however hard you try! And I should know 'cos I have! What on Earth is the point of wasting valuable resources and making storage inaccessible for the purchaser? Of course it all comes down to money. My box is bigger so I must be better. Sorry aren't the only ones guilty of this crime. What's with the boxes for Sega games. A big, fat slab that can't even hold the CD firm inside it. Oh how many times have I opened up a box to find the CD rattling away out of control! At least they're more storage efficient than Sony's but they're still NOT GOOD ENOUGH. Why can't they all just fit out of Neop's (Japan's book and supply place) in a standard, single CD casing? Apart from being smaller, easier and easier to store, I just reckon they look a lot better anyway folks, bigger is NOT always better.

NEXT ISSUE: THE PANZER DRAGOON CHEAT THAT SHOCKED JAPAN



ROB MICHAEL CRICHTON IN COLOSSAL SHOCK.

A young palawan enough to catch Crichton on TV in January this year had the chance to play one of the most exciting games in movie history. Yes, it's Star Wars: The Force Awakens. No comment with sneaking it's way into frame a couple of times, it then went on to wobble around as I cracked the screen in the same below! Hello! Mr Director! In fact, I think the boom mic got more screen time than Michael Douglas. Perhaps Mr Crichton should stick to writing books eh?



UPDATE! Boom mic antics were also prevalent in Gibson thriller Ringers. If you have spotted the little devil anywhere else, drop us a line.

DOUBTFUL IDIOT IN FAMILY FORTUNES SHOCKER

The following is a true account. The defendant's identity has been withheld to protect the innocent. (See Dennis Karmi a part of the body with four lasers Super Commando Arms).

GAME REVIEWS

SEXY PARODIUS

With the advent of the 32-Bit super-controllers came the apparent demise of the traditional 16-bit sheet 'em up. Not because they're not fun anymore, but because developers have become increasingly stale when it comes to game design, and they're more interested in playing with their latest graphical toy - polygons. But there is a bright light shining in the heavens for all those fans of sprite-based gameplay, and it's name is Konami.

The first Parodius is a classic and was an important step for Konami - popularizing their Parodius series with crazy characters and bizarre setting, it was an instant success and has spawned



disappointment. However, a strange characteristic of Konami is that it always takes them a couple of failed attempts on every new machine before they suddenly get to grips with it and start to make an impression. And so we have *Sexy Parodius*.

The first thing that strikes you is that this game has so much energy, it's difficult to describe, but it is one of the first 32-Bit games that has given me the same buzz that I used to get in the days of the PC Engine. It's screen is 'Pop Art'.

As usual with the Parodius series, the music consists mostly of

arrangements of classical and other well-known tunes, and it has to get a special mention as it superb, in the finest 'candy-Japanese-game-BGM' style. This is how game music should sound, not all sound and no tune like a lot of the techno crap you get in most modern releases. Call me old fashioned (or just plain weird), but I enjoy that synthesizer music that the Japanese do so well. One big downer though is that the music is somehow 'troubled' on the CD so you can't listen to it outside of the game. And there's no sound card! Waaaaah!

Although sprite-based, the graphics are perfectly suited to the game, with nice animation, big bosses and it's easy to see what's going on all the time. The Saturn shifts quite a bit around with not even a hint of slowing down either, unless certain other phones 'win up'.

As usual with the Parodius series, the music consists mostly of perfectly suited to the game, with nice animation, big bosses and it's easy to see what's going on all the time. The Saturn shifts quite a bit around with not even a hint of slowing down either, unless certain other phones 'win up'. The usual array of imaginative and very weird creatures is well here too, with some



An *Stone* button gets sent up screens, they are *Buddies* of *Star* which act for the muscle-bound *Brain* - called *Catholics*!

several sequels (mainly on the Super Famicom/SNES).

But when the original *Parodius* was released on Saturn and PlayStation, it was a

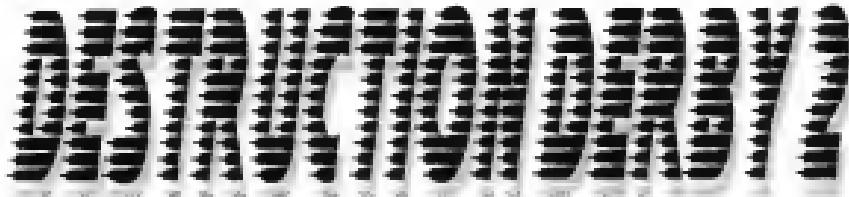


Some impressive *disports* is available!

CREATE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE
To create your Parodius - you have to go through some stages. You cannot bypass them and the last stage is a special sheet 'em up and you can also choose of the type of enemy you like. On one stage 2 enemies, on the next a number of enemies to collect or shoot, and if you have only one then it's to the nearest nest level. From the first, it's not hard to get your game of home to go up, as the music. We are very pleased with the original *Parodius* to keep going, well like, and we are into it. The original game though is the *classic* game, so it's better than the *modern* one.

POWER UP

Since this was the well deserved *Parodius* method of power-ups, I can assume (possibly not) that it's not a wise idea to follow these across up your 'paper or *disports* 'button line. When the direction of your *ctrl* is highlighted you push the button. For those of you who prefer to have your eyes on the screen, auto and continuous power-up options are available.



Because racing games and beat 'em ups seem to be the staple diet of most gamers these days, to make any impact new games have to stand out from the crowd.

Taking all the best bits from the original and tweaking any niggles and complaints that gamers had, Destruction Derby 3 does come across as something different from the norm.

DD3's main appeal derives from the

Ridge Racer Revolution. It's competitive but nothing more, even taking into account some nice track designs later in the game. But for beginners at least, forget trying to get first place, instead, just go for broken - drive backwards, stop sharply, do mid air spins and enjoy it. This is what DD3 is all about.

But despite the instant and violent fun to be had, I can't help but feel that something is missing. Sure the music is well suited, presentation is good enough, and the in-game graphics are very pleasant to the eye. A crack layout with car indicators would've been nice, as well as a rear view mirror, but it doesn't distract too much. However, it is lacking the real spirit that makes you want to come back to it again. The 3D is fine, well designed and consistently programmed, but will you want to play it in two weeks' time?



glorious smash-ups and collisions as you pound into the sides of other cars. All manner of last-ditch and breathtaking spins and jumps are now possible. In fact, the destructive aspect of the game can be highly satisfying at times, especially when you've been getting nowhere for a while and suddenly you manage to smash a competitor into a wild spin, gaining quite a few points in the process.

As far as the racing aspect of the game is concerned, it just doesn't have the same kind of punch as something like



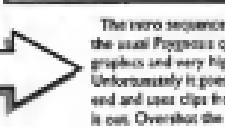
For back and wheel are it!



There are several different events for the Destruction Derby. One has a hang that, when hit precisely can fly you into the air, and another has a chain driven car with

At the bottom right hand corner of the screen is a diagram showing the damage to your vehicle. When the arrows turn red, you should start to worry. If they then turn to green?

Help is at hand though, as a quick trip through the pits allows you a few seconds to repair yourself. In Wreckin' Racing mode, you can stop any time, but in Stock Car you can stop as many times as you like (not a good idea when it's race against the clock).



The intro sequence starts out with the usual Polygonal quality, lowly graphics and very high quality FMV. Unfortunately it goes down hill at the end and uses clips from in-game to pad it out. Overlook the budget aspects!



Jumping and bumping are essential for sending your enemy into orbit!

There are three different ways of playing *Destruction Derby 2*:

WRECKIN' RACING

This lets you on a variety of courses with the simple goal of making as much damage to the other cars as possible. Even though you race for a fixed number of laps, you may as well ignore it because the points only come from spinning or destroying your opponents' vehicles.

STOCK CAR RACING

A straight race so to be the first over the finish line. 200 points are given for damaging other cars, so it's for skilled and experienced racers only.

DESTRUCTION DERBY

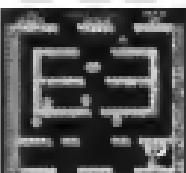
The race starts, this rocks all the cars in an area and then it's each damage to possible. *Crash!*



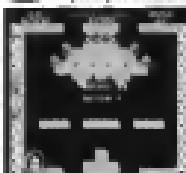
TIPS

BUBBLE BOBBLE (PlayStation/Saturn)

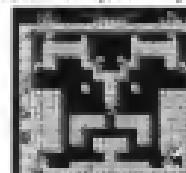
With 100 levels to get through, *Bubble Bobble* is not an easy game. So to give you a head start, here is a list of locations that certain useful objects appear. Remember, although there is a 50% chance that they will appear, the gameplay is usually designed so that if you stand around and wait for them, they won't turn up. So the best advice is to play as normal, but keep an eye out. Also remember that the items listed are the most common and on occasion they will be totally different. (Item positions are random, but not always shown in pic.)



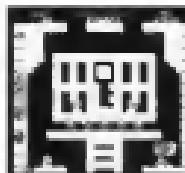
Level 3. Getting the umbrella at the top right gets you to level 10.



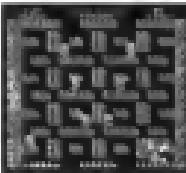
Level 11. Another umbrella for another map. Go for it!



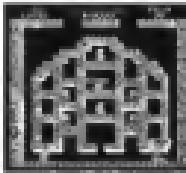
Level 16. A person (middle left) fills the screen with collectibles.



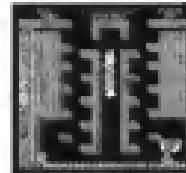
Level 17. The book (right, middle) causes an earthquake and kills off...



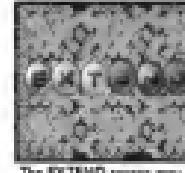
Level 18. Get the drink (cup) for immediately.



Level 19. The ring (top left) using drawn stars and kills the enemy!



Level 26. Another person (left) for collectibles.



The EXTEND screen may look prep, but don't risk your life for lesser bubbles.

QUICKIES

SEGA AGES



AVAILABLE ON SEGA SATURN

By taking three of their most classic coin-ops of the 80's and sticking 'em onto one CD, Sega have given some of us what we have been waiting for for over a decade: arcade **PERFECT** conversions, and at a impossibly generous price. Space Harrier, Asterunner II and Choplant are all pieces of arcade history, using the revolutionary sprite scaling techniques that Sega developed to create fast-paced and addictive games. Although the gameplay is simplistic on each of these games, they are ideal for those times you want something less cerebral. Just pop the CD in, switch on and engage in mindless blasting or driving - and you'll return to them time after time. This is really top-notch, and a must for anyone who remembers the 'good old days'.

SOVIET STRIKE



AVAILABLE ON SONY PLAYSTATION

Following on from the successful Strike series on the 16-bits, Soviet Strike takes the isometric perspective, but allows you 360 degrees rotation of the landscape. While being a bit jerky, it's graphically quite impressive at times, in the manner of very realistically rendered some lovely locations. The gameplay consists of the usual set of missions that you have to complete, and a limited supply of fuel and armor damage, which means some forward planning is required. The presentation must get a mention as it uses FMV to great effect. Little video clips describe weapons or locations, and well acted sequences are played as the game progresses, adding greatly to the overall atmosphere. It's maybe not as engaging as it could have been though, and the strategic elements can make it a bit of a drag for those of us who just want to get in there and have a blast.

TOMB RAIDER



AVAILABLE ON PLAYSTATION, SATURN AND PC

Tomb Raider has received quite a lot of hype from the computer press, and it is well deserved. Chris' writer describes it perfectly as a 3D Prince of Persia, and that's basically what it is. The freedom of movement is cool, the difficulty curve perfectly calculated and the levels interesting and fairly varied, although they could have been more so. The only main criticism I can throw at it is that music is used very sparingly, and you are often playing in silence. This does create a more tense atmosphere, but, sometimes you just wish for something to hum along to. The PlayStation version comes off better than the Saturn, with smoother movement and nicer colours, but all versions are as interactive and enjoyable as each other.

VIRTUA COP 2



AVAILABLE ON SEGA SATURN

Gun games are always good fun, and Sega have taken the formula to new limits. Virtua Cop 2 is an amazing conversion from the arcade, and really puts to rest any doubts over the Saturn's polygon handling. It moves at a very fast pace, with a lot of detail and no polygon break up, unlike so many other games around, even on the PlayStation. The game itself is superbly designed, and the levels and locations are excellent; from a subway carriage (hanging out of the window) to a car chase through town, there is always something to look forward to. Each level has a choice of two routes as well to keep up the variety. As with most games of this type though, it is a bit limited in its longevity, but high-score fans will have enough to keep them going for a while, and if you try using two guns at the same time, it's a right let!

ON THE SCREEN

The Frighteners Dragon Half



OUT NOW AT CINEMAS EVERYWHERE

After a very long time without any hits, it seems that Michael J. Fox is back on track. *The Frighteners* has him as Frank Bananier, a Paranormal Investigator who will stop at any depths of deception to make a fast buck. That's not to say he's a complete fraud though, as even once a car accident where his wife was killed, he's been able to see the spirit of the dead.

Two of these spirits are particularly helpful to him - they claim paranormal havoc in someone's house and leave his business card conveniently lying around. Calls soon follow, and Bananier cleans up the mess - for a fee.

But all is not right. Years after a spate of murders in the town, people start mysteriously dying, apparently of heart attacks, and as Bananier is often seen at the funeral afterwards, the finger is slowly pointed straight at him. However, he is the only one who can see what is really going on - numbers appearing on people's foreheads mark them out in fire for the chop by a dark, shadowed and very Czech-like figure with a scythe. But who or what is it?

Compared to most films, *The Frighteners* has had very little publicity over here, and it's a pity, as it's an extremely enjoyable film. The special effects alone are a good enough reason to see it, with some superb CG effects - especially the Czech character with its sixteen flapping robes.

Even though it's an effects extravaganza, it doesn't rely on them to keep you interested. The story is quite full and moves along at a sufficient pace as to not bore you, and the mystery element is just enough to keep it going. There's plenty of humour as well - director Peter Jackson shows his talent of balancing the macabre with the lighter side very competently indeed.

The only criticism is that the FBI agent is just a little too extreme for his own good, and the 'interrogation' scene is fairly pointless, and could have easily been snipped and not missed. But aside from that, it is wholly entertaining, and visually very impressive (gory in places too), and you shouldn't hesitate to go and see it if you get the chance. **7**



AVAILABLE ON VIDEO FROM A.D. VISION

(01248 379844)

At times, there can be just plain crazy. *Dragon Half* is a perfect example, with the standard fantasy routine turned on its head with considerable success and bags of gags.

Mink is a young girl with a difference. She is the result of a marriage between a dragon and a human, a typical teenage spurt from the wings. And call Oh, and she's got no breath fire too. But what's she to do? She's fallen in love (as these girls have) with the handsome pop singer, Dick Saucer (yes, really!) who happens to be a Dragonlayer by trade. And now Saucer has been contracted to hunt her down! **Top!**

Dragon Half never, EVER, takes itself seriously. It's just straight up Japanese-style mordern from start to end. And it's funny. All the typical goofing and morphing from normal to 3D (Super Deformed) proportions is here, and although this can become tiresome in more serious productions, in *Dragon Half* it works a treat.

The characters are fun - Mink is your typical lovesick teenage girl, who can't believe that Saucer would ever want to hurt her. Dick Saucer is a proud fighter that never seems to win, who has a habit of crashing at the walls around, and the bald-headed king is just a loon.

Sur, some of the gags don't work as well as they might but you're so into the fun of it that it doesn't really matter. If you're new to anime then you may not understand much of it, but that's purely a cultural thing that you'll get used to. If you're a seasoned anime fan then you'll be refreshed at the break from mindless sex and violence that is chevelled contentiously out to us and really enjoy yourself. I just hope there will be more where this came from.

Hey! Test! Go and buy this video now!!



AUDIO REVIEWS

■ GAME MUSIC ■

MISTY BLUE

ALFA RECORDS

CAT: ALCA-123

28 tracks * 50:13 mins

Fine and foreseen, this is a CD of 100% computer chip sound. Now there are those of you who will no doubt scoff at the idea of listening to this stuff, but this review is not for you (no push off). Containing 14 tracks from MISTY BLUE and 14 tracks

from

ACTRAISER, this CD is composed by Yuu Kohara, quite a popular name in the console scene for classic games like SUPER (REVENGE OF) SHINOBII and RARE (STREETS OF RAGE) KNUCKLE.

The sound quality of this collection

is hard to define. It's a 16 Megadrive, but with a far better base and crisply sampled drums, and the recording is very clearly done. The sound for ACTRAISER is a real music box, but underneath, it is very listenable, to the educated anyway.

The music on MISTY BLUE is a strange collection. It starts with what would be a light piano piece called *In The Morning*, and then jumps to a racy, gaudy affair



MISTY BLUE

YUU KOHARA

ALFA RECORDS

CAT: ALCA-123

28 tracks * 50:13 mins

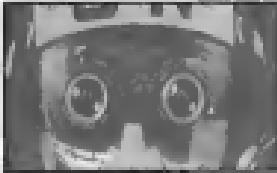
Now suddenly into the next two tracks, *Hold Me Tonight* and *Dancing Heart*. Really, this is so very well composed that it's almost worth buying the CD just for this.

On to ACTRAISER, people who know the music from the SNES/SFC game may be disappointed, as the sound is not nearly as good. It really lacks a solid base to make it stand out, but the tunes are all that matter and while not amazing,

they're a good selection. The last track, however, missing from the SNES version as far as I'm aware is classic Kasthe and is bloody brilliant. It's one of those tunes that make you wish it were a few minutes longer!

Overall, this CD is fairly patchy in places, but the Misty Blue set and some of the ACTRAISER tunes are classics, and more than make up for it.

There are great differences in strength throughout this CD, one moment you're melting in to the sultry, moody piano of track 8 'With Love', and the next you're shocked out of your seat to the violin



■ ANIME SOUNDTRACKS ■

PATLABOR 2 THE MOVIE

ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK 'P2'

VARIOUS VPGC-84268

13 tracks * 50:09 mins

This soundtrack will not be everyone's cup of tea. If you've seen the movie (and if you haven't, why not?) then you'll have a good idea of what to expect. If not, then this could be a bit tricky to determine.

Bolt around two recurring themes, one being a deep, bass string piece and the other is low, rattling synths piece, the main phrase that comes into mind when trying to describe this soundtrack is moody.

There's an almost ethereal feel to these tracks which can be very haunting in places, especially tracks 5 and 6, 'Unnatural' and 'I'm a

of 'Outbreak' with its walkie-talkie style snarl pounding away in the background.

All the music is composed and performed by Keiji (Ghost In The Shell) Kawai who is now on my list of favourite Japanese composers. The booklet accompanying the CD is well worth a nosey too. Sporting a strong image on the front cover and also on the first two pages by Yutaka Ishiuchi, the booklet contains a selection of stills from the film, specs of the INGRAM, a voice cast and movie staff list and a discography of all the Puffin albums and singles (with some nice pictures of Nob, eh, and some tracks if you prefer that sort of thing instead).

I loved the film and I love this CD as well. I recommend that you give this a try even if you weren't that keen on the movie, as I guarantee that it'll prove you in time. Go on, you never know if you don't try.

■ MOVIE SOUNDTRACKS ■

INDEPENDENCE DAY

BBC Music

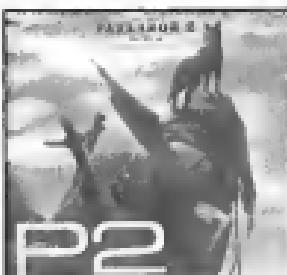
CAT: OVS034 88544 3

14 media * 50:17 mins

Only a few years ago, very few movie fans had heard of David Arnold. However, in a short space of time and only two major film soundtracks (out of four), he is fast proving himself as one of the most talented and promising composers to appear in a long, long time. Breathing aside his score for *Blitzkrieg* The



that comes a mix mesh of mainly slow themes of average worth and *I Wanna Close The Deal* which is racy and pretty smart. But where Toco really shows his talent is track 9 - Misty Blue which



P2

Young Americans, Arnold's first big break was with the surprise hit, *Starship*, in which he produced a stunning soundtrack and set himself a standard that will be very difficult to beat. Now, coming up again with the guys behind *Starship*, the soundtrack to *Independence Day* proves that he is a one-hit-wonder. When it comes to writing music that works well as a movie and is equally listenable on its own, Arnold has a distinct talent. His soundtrack to *ID4*, much like *Starship* before it, is very thematic in its approach, composed with a selection of definite tunes that come in to play at the appropriate times. The main theme is a perfectly patriotic piece, fitting the style



of the movie like a glove, and the others are both ominous and powerful enough to complement each other perfectly.

This is a soundtrack that rarely stops to take a breath - it is immensely powerful in places and while not as easy to get to grips with as *Starship* was, is very much worth the effort. If I had to make a choice between the *Starship* and *ID4* soundtracks, I would have to say that the former work does win out, with a more varied and individual range of tracks, but *ID4* puts up a good fight and is without doubt one of the best soundtracks of 1996, and one very serious film cannot do without. So it's thumbs up again for Mr Arnold and it's nice to see a first doing as well. He's well on his way to becoming the next John Williams, and that's about the highest compliment I can give anyone. I

WHERE TO GET THEM

Arnold soundtrack available from any good music stocking store. By Andrew Trojanski (01344 370044) or Shout! Since Cinema (0114 2754000) for many of the better selections.

Tower Records, London (0871 409 2500) who have a limited supply in stock. They also stock Jay-Z.

Given that it is the first to come by far, I know the aforementioned Tower Records don't have some, but very few, if you're interested, try ringing them and see if you get success (a Tower Copycat 0114 211 4421 x 10, Telephone 0114 3203443 and if enough people ring them, they may want to get some in



FAMOUS HOLLYWOOD RIP-OFFS no.1



When Disney's *The Little Mermaid* first came out, it caused some controversy with anime fans. While it claimed to be Disney's first original animated movie (i.e. not from a previous story/parody), it bore some striking similarities to an old Japanese anime series called (in the US) *Kimba, The White Lion*. Not least of these was the name of the lead character (Kanga/Seisaku). What made matters worse was that Disney has always had a reputation of coming down very hard on anyone who even thinks about fracturing their copyrighted in any way, yet *Kimba* was not even credited as an influence. The upshot of all the evidence is that a major movie was ripped off an anime. But it hasn't stopped there. Anyone who saw the *farce* movie *Free Willy over Christmas* may have thought that was just another crappy Hollywood kid's movie. But it is far more sinister than that. There is an animated film, released by Rankin in the UK that has some, eye-brow-raisingly similar plot points, despite being made two years earlier. Here is the evidence. Convinced? You be the judge.

FLY PAPER (1991)

- Young independent boy who has no father.
- Boy plays an animal which the whale strangely responds to.
- The whale is captured and put into a public show.
- There is pressure on the owner to make the whale perform tricks.
- The boy goes to the local market to get money to feed the whale.
- The whale responds only to the boy, as if there is a link between them.
- The whale's mother is calling him from the ocean nearby. The whale comes because it can hear her.
- The whale fails to perform at the big opening day (except for one jump over a gate to escape).
- The boy tries to free the whale, but the bad guy-owner attempts to stop him.
- The whale is blocked from escaping by side gates.
- The boy plays his clarinet, leading the whale to it's freedom.
- The whale makes a heroic jump over the flood gates, next to the boy, and onto freedom with it's mother.

FREE WILLY (1993)

- Young independent boy who has no parents.
- They play a harmonica which the whale strangely responds to.
- The whale is captured and put into a public show.
- There is pressure on the owner to make the whale perform tricks.
- The boy goes to the local market to get money to feed the whale.
- The whale responds only to the boy, as if there is a link between them.
- The whale's 'family' is calling him from the ocean nearby. The whale comes because it can hear them.
- The whale fails to perform at the big opening day.
- The boy tries to free the whale, but the bad guy-owner attempts to stop him.
- The whale is blocked from escaping by nets.
- The boy leads the whale to it's freedom.
- The whale makes a heroic leap over the rocks, over the boy's head and onto freedom with it's family.



Hirosshima Peace Park

Hirosshima, city in Japan southwestern Honshu, capital of Hirosshima Prefecture at the head of Hirosshima Bay. The city was founded in 1584 on an island at the Ota River delta. Hirosshima grew rapidly as a commercial city, and after 1868 it was developed as a military base.

(Microsoft Encarta '97)

In August 1953, under the Hirosshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law, the Peace Park was consecrated to act as a place for prayer and peace in memory of the 75,000 people who died from the atomic bomb. Since that day almost 200,000 people have succumbed to the effects of radiation sickness and other related diseases brought about by the poison and unnecessary act. If it wasn't for the Peace Park and it's terrible history, Hirosshima would seem like any other Japanese city with a proportion of just over a million, the high rise office blocks and ancient temples. When I visited Japan three years ago I had made the point of going to the Park with the hope of trying to understand what it was like on that fateful day.

The Peace Dome is the only surviving building from the blast to be left standing in its original state. Previously the Industrial Promotion Hall, the dome has been left as a symbol of peace and an eternal reminder of the horrific destruction of the bomb. The dome hasn't changed in the 50 years since the bombing, with the exception of the supporting girders that hold the dome structure together, and you get a vintage feeling as you walk round the building with its twisted girders and skeletal dome.

Across the river from the Peace Dome, in the main part of the park is the Cenotaph. This concrete arch has, buried beneath it in a casket, a list with all the names of the known victims of the

atomic bomb. There is also a flame burning in remembrance that, unlike other similar symbols of war, this is not an eternal flame as it will be extinguished when the last nuclear weapon is destroyed. Next to the monument is a plaque on which these words are written:

**"THIS
MONUMENT WAS
ERECTED IN THE
HOPE THAT HIROSHIMA,
DEVASTATED BY THE
WORLD'S FIRST ATOMIC BOMB
ON 6 AUGUST 1945, WOULD BE
REBUILT AS A CITY OF PEACE."**

The speech reads
**"LET ALL THE SOULS HERE
REST IN PEACE, FOR WE SHALL
NOT REPEAT THE EVIL."**

It summons people everywhere to pray

for the souls of the deceased A-bomb victims and to join in the pledge never to repeat the evil of war. It thus expresses the "Heart of Hiroshima" which enduring just grief and overcoming hatred, yearns for the realization of true world peace with the consciousness and prosperity of all humankind. Wise words indeed.

As well as the Peace Dome and the

Cenotaph there are two other areas of the park which really bring the message home.

The first is the Memorial Museum

which houses some of the most moving and disturbing images I have ever seen. The first thing that hits you as you enter is a diagram of how the city looked just after the bomb was dropped. It is hard to imagine that barren wasteland in front of you used to be a busy city. Moving further into the museum the next "exhibit" might seem rather strange at first sight. What



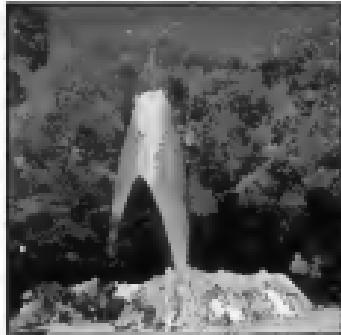
The Peace Dome is the only structure that survived "intact" from the blast of the Atomic Bomb dropped on Hiroshima.



Bon Festival in Hiroshima

The Mahayana Buddhist festival of Utsukusha, known as Bon in Japan, is held in mid-July and marks the return of ancestral spirits to their former homes. Rowboats made of bamboo reeds are also placed by the riverbank, and at the end of the festival lanterns are set afloat to ferry the spirits back to the land of the dead. In Hiroshima the ceremony has been adapted to commemorate those who died following the atomic bomb attack in 1945. Here, lanterns float for the souls of the bomb victims float in front of the Atomic Bomb Memorial Dome, which has been preserved as it was after the bombing. (Microsoft Encarta '97)

appears to be a set of ordinary wooden steps with an even more ordinary dark wooden door. But one might not seem very significant, until you learn that this is actually the 'mausoleum' of a person who was caught in the blast and reportedly survived.



(Microsoft Encarta '97)

The second area of the park holds the Children's Peace Memorial. This is represented by a wooden statue of a young girl holding an origami crane. The girl is Sadako and when she was

diagnosed with leukaemia at the age of 10 years decided to fold 1000 paper cranes, believing that she would recover upon completion of this task. In Japan the crane is regarded as a symbol of happiness and longevity. Unfortunately Sadako died after completing only 644 cranes, but the children at her school finished the remaining 356 and the string of 1000 paper cranes was buried with her. This has now become quite a custom among schools in Japan and the base of the statue is buried in thousands upon thousands of coloured paper cranes in memory of this brave young girl.

It would be difficult for anyone not to come away from this park and city without feeling the mix of emotions brought about by the images presented here. You are only feel disgusted that this tragic could have happened, yet never forget with the bombing of Nagasaki, but you also have a sense of wonder and respect at the courage and bravery of the people of Hiroshima who took their devastated city and rebuilt it like a phoenix from the ashes into a



thriving community with green parks and happy faces. And to think they said that nothing would ever grow here.

Sadly, there are fewer survivors left each year from that day, but those who are can be seen in the parks, talking to the children and passing on the stories of that terrible day in the hope that this new generation will make sure that the cannot and will not happen again.

UMBILICAL PALS



John de Lancie

In an effort to be totally unoriginal and copy everything that other journalists do, we present the 'Rockstars' bit.

In the spotlight this issue is John de Lancie, who plays the competent 'G' in Star Trek, and the Doctor from the *Haiky Metabolism* advert. Quite a striking resemblance, wouldn't you say? Not! Well not yet then.



Maks

ON THE PAGE

BUBBLEGUM CRISIS -

GRAND PAL

By Adam Warren

AMADA BOOKS

£9.99 * 120 pages *

Full colour

Taking his leave from scriptwriter Toru Seiki, **GRAND PAL** is America and Adam Warren's own work, full colour and set in the world of the popular anime series

BUBBLEGUM CRISIS. For those of you who are not familiar with the anime, **BUBBLEGUM CRISIS** is set in Megu Tokyo, where the giant **Corporation** has a strong hold over the city. With the AD Police unable to keep up with the crime, a vigilante group known as the **Knight Sabers** have sprung out of the cracks, using powerful 'kunabis' that afford them a great deal of protection, agility and powerful weaponry. The group is made up of four women, the most energetic and popular of which is the rock singer, **Mia**.

The story behind **GRAND PAL** begins when a dishevelled looking man with wild hair arrives in Megu Tokyo. Suffering from hallucinations of necessity engulfing him, he finds himself fighting them, and the uncontrollable bouts of extreme violence that follow. Making his way into the city, he has to do the **Corporation**'s dirty work, and he can destroy them with the technology that they created. What results is a battle



that has the **Knight Sabers** fighting for their lives.

Before I give any sort of opinion on this pseudo-manga, I should explain the following. In times past, I used to read **2002MO**. The reason that manga had such a great appeal to me was

that, unlike western comics, the stories and action flowed beautifully between scenes, much more like a movie than a comic. By comparison, the British and American comics seemed clunky and difficult to read.

However, Japanese comics rely mostly on the pictorial elements to tell a story, western ones are often disturbed with lines of text to wade through. And this is where, in my opinion, **GRAND PAL** falls down. It looks like an 'American Manga' and it reads in a very western way. For the number of pages, very little of actual consequence seems to happen, and before long I had to force myself to keep reading, purely so I could review it.

I'm not a Warren basher, and I enjoy a good book as much as the next man, but when you start to fill a comic with so many disjointed pieces of text, it becomes a chore, rather than a pleasure, to read.

If you like American style comics then you may well enjoy this, but if you've come across it maybe because of the way it is written and presented, then I doubt that there's enough here for your money. I can think of better ways to spend a pound.

LAPUTA - THE CASTLE IN THE SKY ANIMAT COMICS SPECIAL

Volume 1-4
(Japanese Language)
710 yen each * 124
pages each
Full Colour

Asami comics
Have yet to
become
widely spread in the
west, but in Japan,
they are very

popular. To create them, original cells are photographed from the chosen film, series etc, and word balloons and effects are added on top. What you end up with is a high quality colour comic with a scratch on film to draw over.

The subject of this set will no doubt be familiar to anime fans. One of director Hayao Miyazaki's greatest works, **LAPUTA** has already made an appearance on ITV a couple of times, but is unfortunately unavailable on video. The story of **LAPUTA**, very loosely based around a tale from Guillermo's Travels, involves a mythical island of unbridled creativity and power that floats in the sky. The film opens with a scene of sky gnomes attacking a government airship in search of Sheeta - a young girl

with a magical 'Invitation stone', who has been taken from her home by a secret agent called Muksa. During the conflict, Sheeta climbs outside the ship, desperately clinging on, but slips and falls through the clouds to the land below.

Lossing consciousness, she is unaware of the invitation stone as it bursts into life, flinging her gently down to the ground where Pazu (Pedro in the dub), a young boy



who works in a mine, finds her and takes her home. The pair then find themselves being pursued by both the pirates (the Dala family) and the army, until Sheeta is recognised and Pazu joins forces with Dala and her boys. They set out to rescue Sheeta and finally try to reach the mind of Laputa, which Muksa is intent on controlling.

Anyone who enjoys the works of Miyazaki will love these books, as they give you a chance to really appreciate all the artwork that goes into one of his films. The fact that it's in Japanese is of little importance, even if you've never seen the film before. Also, if you were one of the poor souls who saw **Laputa** the second time

it was shown on TV, you'll get the chance to see all the bits that were cut out (and there was a lot). And even better, there's an advert for Laputa drinks in the back of each, that features a photo of a real-life Sheeta and Pazu in one of Dala's flying 'Dragonflies'. Anyone for a live-action version?

You should be able to find the **LAPUTA - ANIMAT COMIC SPECIAL** books in specialist shops like The Sci-Fi'd Space Centre (01442

2738955 or
Asahi Books
in Finsbury
Park, London
(0181)
20000318)



RETRO GAMING

Retro gaming. What's it all about? Well it's not about some obnoxious competitive type who will refuse to submit to the fact that his Spectrum is NOT a better machine than the Nintendo 64. It's a way of acknowledging the heritage of video games today, and most of all, it's pure nostalgia.

But retro isn't just about the era of the Speccy and Commodore 64 as some people would have you believe. We mustn't forget the more recent deities in the family, such as the NES and Master Systems. Even the Megadrive and PC Engine are old enough now to come under the grand umbrella, and we will be dealing with them in time.

But the first machine I want to deal with is Sega's good old Master System. Although it didn't have a big success in Japan and the States, it single-handedly resurrected the arcade scene in the UK, thanks to careful marketing by Virgin Megastore and some top-notch arcade conversions. In the Black Years when the 8-bit computers were slowly running out of steam, there was finally a light at the end of the tunnel.

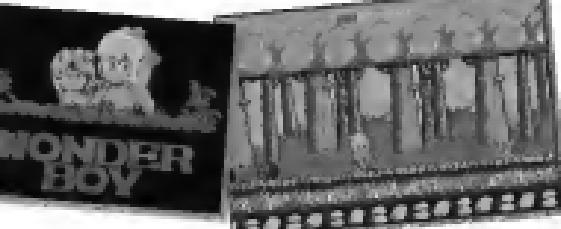
Sega's top line in cheap-looking peripherals, from the light gun to 3D glasses. Light gun games are now making a comeback, whereas real 3D games... well, the *Homeboy* says it all.



One of the good things about the Master System was it's choice of cool-looking peripherals. The first of these was for those wussies who couldn't get the hang of the poor old keypad - the Sega Control Stick. On the Master System it was known by everybody else. As you can see, it is quite an odd design for a joystick, but it was just the thing for that "arcade feel" maybe.

In fact, it is probably the worst joystick I have ever had the misfortune to use - you'd get more control with those old tele-screw knobs that came with the original pads, and they were a joke. Just try putting in an Up, Up, Down, Down-Left etc. cheat in. Not a chance, mate.

Next up is the Sega Light Phaser. This



was in direct competition with Nintendo's Zapper gun, but with some classic titles, it was much more fun. The combo cartridge that came with it contained three simple mini games which were fun enough for a while, but it was stuff like *Gangster Town* and the graphically excellent *Rambo III* that really made a worthwhile Remember, without games like these, Virtua Cop and Time Crisis might never have come to pass.

Thirdly comes the 3D glasses. By rapidly flicking the lenses in time with the screen, the 3D effect worked surprisingly well. Two Sega classics, *Outrun* and *Space Harrier* were given

3D effects, and these include energy吸收, and the like, but also a skateboard which lets you power through the level (visible to stop) and an invincibility angle. Cool!

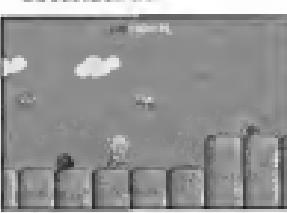
When Sega converted *Wonderboy*, they managed a virtually arcade perfect job. Improving on some of the graphics like the frogs and computers. The moving platforms were a little too much for the poor HS to handle though and the divided sprite flicker is very much in evidence. But for ruin the game, it makes it easier to see which platforms are walking to plague you to your death, so I'm not complaining!

It's strange to think that a game written on a crumpled old litter console can still be great fun today, but it is. And I don't just mean in a nostalgic-is-new-pretty-good-for-the-time sense. It still is a smart game, and probably the best, or at least most long lasting arcade game on the Master System.

INTERESTING FACT BIT: The Japanese version was called *Super Wonder Boy* and the level layout is slightly different, and a bit harder too.

3D overhead, and although it slowed the game down a little the effect was worth it. Oh, the screaming when in *Space Harrier* 3D a row of spikes came hurtling out of the screen at you! Great stuff!

One of the first three games I got on the Master System (along with *Hung On* and *Out Law*) was *Wonderboy*. Converted from the arcade version, *Wonderboy* is one of the all time classic platform games. The game play is extremely simple - no exploration or puzzles - just leg it from left to right, jumping, chains, rocks and enemies while throwing your self-reinventing hachette at anything that dares to move. Collectables are hidden



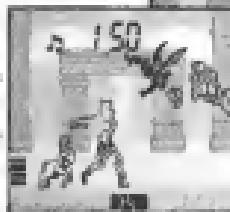
WONDERBOY is great fun. Buy it!

Another long lived game on the Master System was Shanghai. Not an arcade game at all, Shanghai is a puzzle game that uses the tiles from the ancient Chinese game of Mah Jong.

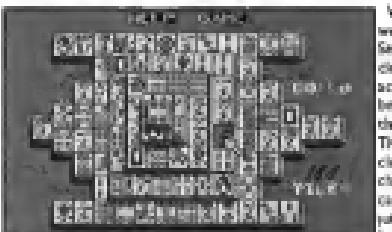
The tiles are set up in a certain formation, each tile with three "duplicates" that it can be paired to. The object of the game is to remove all the tiles from the table - but there is a catch. You can only remove matching pairs, and these must be free to move either left or right, and nothing can be on top of them. It sounds pretty weird, and it takes some getting used to (especially the Chinese characters on the tiles), but

it really is one of the most enjoyable and addictive puzzle games ever devised.

The Master System version was graphically well done - a lot of Amiga Public Domain versions I have seen make it very difficult to judge the height - and was blessed with three bonus during play (two gold, and one GIG). But the best bit is the ending, where a brilliantly drawn great dragon appears on screen, blows a fireball, then vanishes from the cell upwards in a very nice effect for the time.



get enough, you transform. It's just like the real thing! (Um, well your head changes and that's all, but it's the thought that counts.)



SHANGHAI She can not look like much, but she's got it where it counts, and

while we're on the subject of Sega stuff, during a clearance sale day, I came across one of my favourites bit of spin-off grandeur: the Altered Beast watch! This is what you call real class! As your beast chappie scrolls along, you can punch away (and even jump kick) at the attacking snakes around you. As with the original, power-ups are collected by killing the snakes, and when you

needless to say, this hours of fun could be had by all, until the batteries ran out, at least and the screen got chipped up with dust and grime. Remember that?



ICEMAN SPOTTED ON MOUNTAIN

Any passing Portman among the readership may be interested in this little gem. In February of this year, National did a series of documentaries about icemen - The frozen bodies of people found in cold, mountainous areas. But while passing across just such a landscape, the eagle-eyed may have noticed the image of a man's face in the mountains. Could this have been the real Iceman?

NEXT ISSUE

Now the Special Editions are out, we're Star Wars mad. We'll give our highly detailed (wacky) opinion, have a look at the ultimate reference book, *The Star Wars Chronicle*, and cast our eyes over some of the older and newer Star Wars games.

Along with top game reviews, CDs, action (New! Genesis! Evangelion!) and all the little snippets that you can catch more than once (space filters, this is one issue you don't afford to miss!) Issue 2 is out around July 20th and costs £1.99 including p&p. Cheques/Postal Orders must be to *Post Doctor* (Order ref:



HEY, THAT'S
ME!